



DOUGLAS COUNTY, NEBRASKA

A look into how Nebraska's largest County continues to thrive amidst historically challenging times.

2020



2022



A LETTER FROM MARY ANN BORGESON

CHAIRWOMAN, DOUGLAS COUNTY BOARD

On behalf of the Douglas County Board of Commissioners and County staff, I am pleased to present our first Douglas County Impact Report for 2020-2022.

I am honored to serve as Chairwoman of the Douglas County Board of Commissioners, the state's largest, most diverse and most populated County.

I am proud to lead our County's efforts to create a community where residents who need help can find it, where everyone shares in opportunity and where our most vulnerable are taken care of.

Everyone understands how difficult 2020 was. The pandemic challenged our lives in so many ways – big and small. We mourn those we've lost during the pandemic and are grateful to all who have continued to thrive. Throughout this global crisis of the COVID-19 pandemic, Douglas County government never closed. Our leaders and staff found ways to keep our essential services running while adjusting operations to keep our employees safe. We worked closely with our local, state and national partners to continually keep the public informed throughout the pandemic.

Together, we made a tremendous impact and achieved much by listening to each other and working together cooperatively and collaboratively.

Through our Impact Report, you will read about the wonderful Douglas County staff we have in place. I thank them for their dedication and perseverance.



A LETTER FROM PATRICK BLOOMINGDALE

CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER

Douglas County is a vibrant and thriving community located on the banks of the Missouri River in eastern Nebraska. Douglas County provides a wide array of vital services to its residents, including public safety, law enforcement, public health, and general assistance for low-income people, to name just a few.

Douglas County's unwavering commitment to serving its residents was most evident during the COVID-19 pandemic, when the County used its allotment of CARES ACT funds to provide various forms of financial aid to those most affected by the pandemic, including those struggling to pay their rent and local businesses who were hit hard by COVID-19 restrictions, resulting in loss of revenue. Also during the pandemic, the Douglas County Health Department provided free COVID-19 vaccinations and testing for thousands of residents.

Most recently, the Douglas County Board has demonstrated its commitment to juvenile justice reform and mental health awareness and treatment. The County will open the new Douglas County Justice Center in the summer of 2023, with a focus on state-of-the-art buildings and services geared toward best practices in juvenile justice reform. The County Board has also set aside \$8 million dollars for enhanced mental health services and education, and looks to partner with community providers to enhance mental health services and education countywide.

I am honored and humbled to be approaching my 30th year of service as a Douglas County employee, and my 10th year as the Chief Administrative Officer. Douglas County is truly a fantastic place to live, work and play!



Photo credit: Brad Williams Photography

Loneragan Reservoir is located near North 84th Street and Bennington Road.



Photo credit: Douglas County GIS

The Douglas County Courthouse, 1701 Farnam Street, was built in 1912.

Douglas County is the largest County in Nebraska, with more than 584,000 residents, according to the 2020 U.S. Census Bureau data. Douglas County includes the following municipalities: Omaha, Ralston, Bennington, Valley and the Village of Waterloo.

The Douglas County Board of Commissioners is made up of seven County Commissioners. Each commissioner's district has more than 83,000 residents. County Commissioners are elected to a four-year term. See pages 4 and 5 to meet your Douglas County Board of Commissioners.

ABOUT THIS REPORT:

Questions about this report can be directed to Douglas County Communications Director Leia Baez at 402-444-6439 or leia.baez@douglascounty-ne.gov.

A special thanks to Kelly Laine Design and Brad Williams Photography for their contributions to this report.

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Meet your **DOUGLAS COUNTY**



COMMISSIONER
Mike Friend

DISTRICT 7

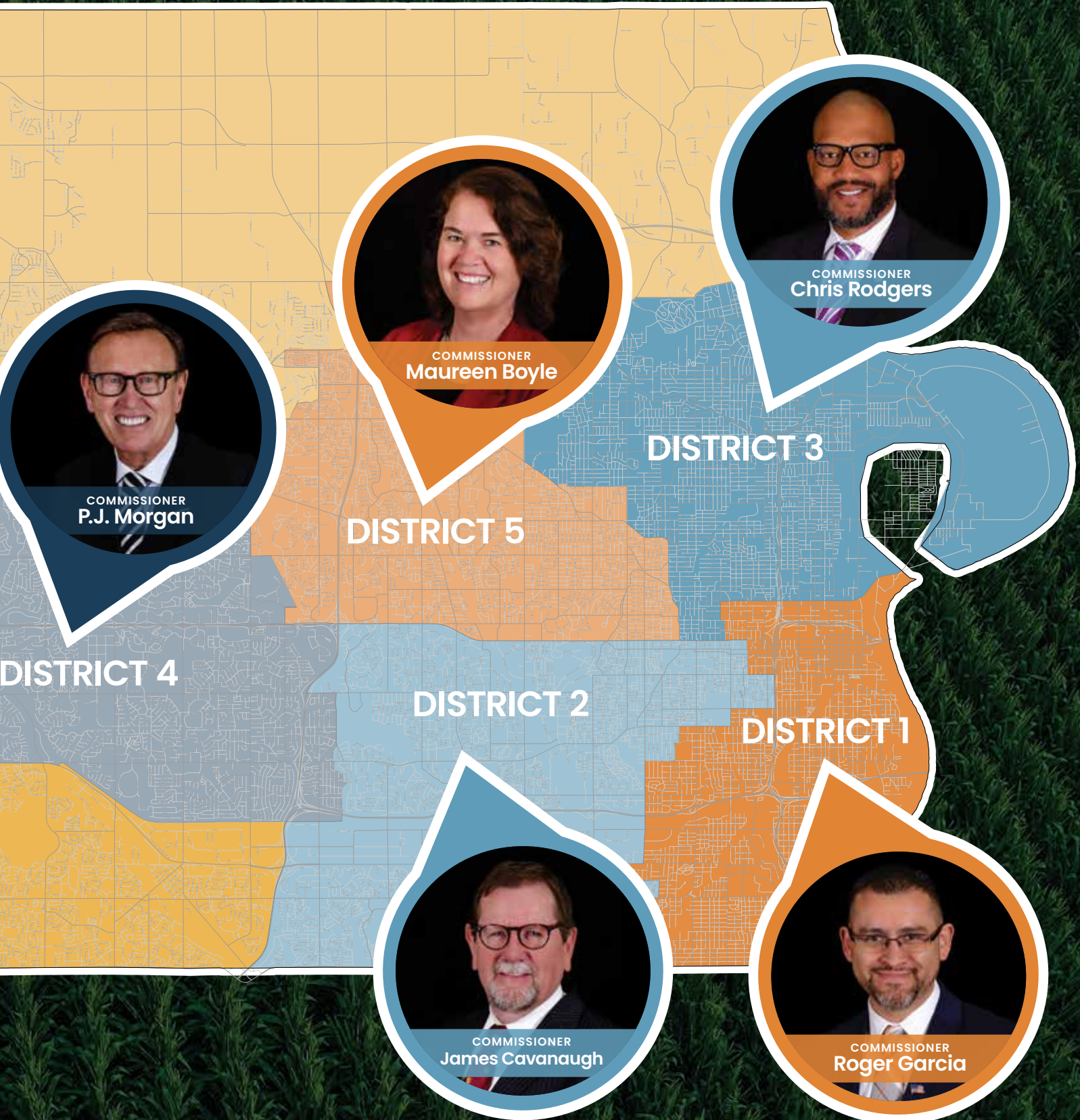
DISTRICT 6



COMMISSIONER
Mary Ann Borgeson



COMMISSIONERS



DOUGLAS COUNTY FINANCIALS



Working through the challenges driven by the pandemic, the Douglas County Board of Commissioners adopted a balanced budget for both fiscal years 2020/21 and 2021/22, keeping the property tax levy unchanged at 29.559 cents per \$100 of assessed value. The County portion of property taxes results in the owner of a property assessed at a \$200,000 valuation having to pay approximately \$590 in property tax.

The most significant capital project being undertaken by the County is the construction of a \$128 million Justice Center on Harney Street, across from the Douglas County Courthouse. The new center will include a tower housing new juvenile courtrooms and offices for the County Attorney and Public Defender staff, a new juvenile detention center and a refurbished building for the Juvenile Probation Department. The project is scheduled to be completed in the summer of 2023.

Douglas County received significant awards from the Federal Government to help the local community deal with the negative impacts of the pandemic. The County received \$166 million in CARES Act funding. These funds were allocated to four major sections of

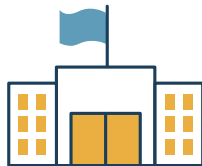
the community: Douglas County departments and offices, other units of local governments, rent and utility assistance programs, and awards to local non-profit organizations. These funds provided a stimulus to the local economy coping with the impacts of the lockdowns driven by measures put in place to deal with the COVID-19 virus. The Douglas County Health Department, which has been at the forefront of local efforts to mitigate the spread of the virus and manage vaccination programs, has been the leading department in this effort.

The County has also been allocated approximately \$111 million in American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funding in two equal installments. The County Board has decided to prioritize the utilization of these funds for internal County government requests and for requests related to projects which will improve mental health services across the County, while also allocating \$2.5 million of the ARPA funding to each of the seven Commissioners (a total of \$17.5 million) to aid their districts. The County has also been awarded approximately \$8 million of Emergency Rental Assistance (ERA) funding, which it is using for rent and utility assistance programs in areas of Douglas County outside Omaha city limits.

CARES ACT FUNDING *IN DOUGLAS COUNTY*



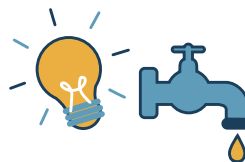
NON-PROFITS
\$33M



LOCAL GOVERNMENT
\$96M



MENTAL HEALTH
\$8M



UTILITY ASSISTANCE
\$4M



RENTAL ASSISTANCE
\$10M



HEALTH DEPARTMENT
\$13M

ARPA FUNDING ALLOCATIONS

IN DOUGLAS COUNTY



Where 2021 Douglas County Spending Went



*General Government includes Assessor, Clerk, Commissioners, Extension, Election Commission, Purchasing, Register of Deeds, Treasurer, Administration, Civil Service, Public Properties and GIS.

**Interfund Activity includes Inheritance Tax, Inventory Fund, Insurance Fund and Lottery Fund.

THE JUSTICE CENTER PROJECT



Rendering



Near Completion



Juvenile Probation Ribbon Cutting

The Douglas County Justice Center, one of Douglas County's largest projects to date, is taking shape and on track to be fully operational in the summer of 2023.

The Justice Center expansion at 17th and Harney Streets sits across the street from the current Hall of Justice, which was built in 1912. The project will address major space issues, streamline the judicial process and coordinate services to the community.

"Our 100-year-old courthouse has served us well," said Commissioner Mary Ann Borgeson, Chairwoman of the Douglas County Board. "This project has been 20 years in the making so to see it finally come to fruition is monumental."

Commissioner Borgeson also called the project "historic" because it is Douglas County's first project to be completed under a public-private partnership. The Justice Center

Development Corporation, a not-for-profit corporation aimed at bringing together expertise in architecture, design, business practices and construction, was created solely for this project.

The project consists of two main elements. First, the Justice Center Tower, an office complex consisting of a new eight-story office tower and the former Metropolitan Utilities District headquarters renovated for office space for Douglas County Juvenile Probation. In addition to housing the County Attorney and Public Defender's offices, the Justice Center Tower will also house Douglas County's juvenile court system, including six courtrooms.

The second element of the project is a four-story Youth Center. Both elements are united with a skywalk that will connect the new complex to the Douglas County Hall of Justice. The total construction cost for the project was \$128 million.

“The Douglas County Justice Center reflects the optimism and hope upon which Nebraska juvenile law is based. It is an investment in the success of our children and the safety of our community.

— JUDGE MARY “PEG” STEVENS
Separate Juvenile Court for Douglas County





Photo credit: Douglas County

The Douglas County Justice Center under construction in June 2021.



Photo credit: Kiewit

A skywalk connects the Douglas County Justice Center to the Douglas County Hall of Justice.

At the Justice Center Tower's Topping off Ceremony on July 14, 2021, Douglas County Attorney Don Kleine said the project is much needed.

"We were beyond capacity here," Kleine said of the current Hall of Justice. "I have people in four different buildings in this area as part of the County Attorney's Office. I have people in the AIM Building, I have people on the ninth floor of the Civic Center, I have people on the first floor of the Courthouse and people in the basement of the Courthouse."

Kleine said being able to have his team working under the same roof will be a huge improvement in efficiency and staff morale.

Douglas County Public Defender Tom Riley echoed those sentiments. "Our staff is very excited about the

move. The new facility is forward-looking and is large enough for our current staff and provides room for expansion."

Riley said his team is also excited about having multiple conference rooms available for staff meetings and being next door to the Youth Center, making it easier to visit with clients.

Relocating the Youth Center downtown and co-locating services will benefit families, said Kim Hawekotte, Deputy County Administrator for Juvenile Services.

"Juvenile Justice Reform is like a puzzle. All the pieces are vital to complete the picture," she said. "The Justice Center, along with the relationship-building programs and services, will create long-lasting community change for the benefit of our youth and families."

TOWER LEVEL BREAKDOWN



FLOOR 7 **County Attorney**

FLOOR 6 **County Attorney**

FLOOR 5 **Public Defender**

FLOOR 4 **Public Defender, Juvenile Court Administrator and Juvenile Court Clerk**

FLOOR 3 **Juvenile Courts 5 & 6**

FLOOR 2 **Juvenile Courts 1-4**

FLOOR 1 **Lobby, Large Conference Rooms, Building Services**

BASEMENT **Building Services**



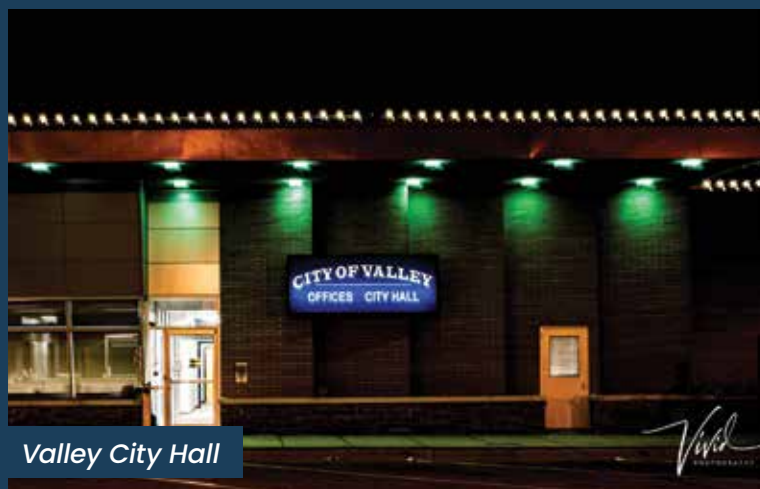
The Bob Kerrey Pedestrian Bridge, located in downtown Omaha



The Waterford Building at Fountain Ridge Office Park in Omaha



Ralston City Hall



Valley City Hall

In November 2022, the Douglas County Veterans Service Office participated in Operation Green Light, a national initiative to support military veterans, as well as raise awareness about the resources available to assist veterans and their families. Several Douglas County buildings and community businesses were illuminated green from November 7th through the 13th as part of Operation Green Light.

The above photos are credited to the following: Claire Guinzy with Vivid Photography and Barbara Rimel Photography



The Granary Green in Ralston is a new venue, hosting outdoor concerts and events.

Photo credit: City of Ralston



Douglas County
Election Commissioner
Brian Kruse

PROTECTING VOTING RIGHTS IN COVID-19 ERA

Douglas County Election Commissioner Brian Kruse didn't want a global pandemic to keep residents from exercising their right to vote.

"The voters of Douglas County adapted remarkably well and election workers stepped up to ensure our polls were open during the pandemic," Kruse said. "I could not be more proud of our 14 permanent staff members of the Election Commission who were and are the true heroes of the pandemic elections. They worked 70-plus hours a week in 2020, making the elections happen essentially flawless, while allowing voters to have their voices heard."

Even though the pandemic started just two months before the May 10, 2020, Primary Election, the election was still conducted with 200 polling places, staffed by over 1,000 election workers.

The Election Commission made dramatic changes in the early days of the pandemic, including:

- Producing training videos in-house and utilizing internal staff to make videos available online for poll workers.
- Ordering thousands of additional envelopes for by-mail early voting.
- Releasing countless press releases, social media posts and conducting in-person media interviews to inform and educate the public of their options for voting. As a result, the vast majority of voters transitioned to by-mail early voting with 87 percent voting by-mail in May 2020 (in-person early voting was suspended by the state).
- Training poll workers in safety measures, such as sanitizing polling stations and social distancing protocols.
- Providing masks, gloves, disposable pens, sanitizing wipes and hand sanitizer for poll workers and voters.

Those changes were beneficial for the General Election in November 2020 as well, resulting in a record voter turnout of 74.56 percent or 278,509 voters.

“Following 2020, voters are better educated on options for voting, poll workers continue to be trained online and processes in many ways have become more efficient.”

BRIAN KRUSE

Douglas County Election Commissioner





A look at the COVID-19 Dashboard on November 7, 2022.

INNOVATION DURING CRISIS

When the COVID-19 pandemic hit and Douglas County Health Department officials were scrambling in response, Mike Schonlau, Douglas County GIS Administrator, knew he and his team had to step up.

“COVID was taking off quickly and we knew the Health Department was being inundated with requests for information, so we were eager to find a way to help,” Schonlau said. “One of the things we can do is work with data and publish data for people to visualize. We saw what Johns Hopkins University was doing with their national and global COVID-19 dashboards and our team wanted to do something local for Douglas County.”

MIKE SCHONLAU, Douglas County GIS Administrator

The Douglas County GIS (Geographic Information Systems) Department provides location-based services, including maps, mapping websites, analysis, and geospatial data to Douglas County and City of Omaha departments, other government agencies, and the public.

But for the pandemic, Schonlau and his team of four full-time employees did something they had never done before – built from scratch Douglas County’s official COVID-19 Dashboard at covid19.dogis.org – to keep the public informed with real-time updates and case numbers.

“We worked with the Health Department to gather the data and went back and forth with what data we wanted to display,” he said. “The Health Department’s Epidemiology staff played an important role

in the success of our dashboard, constantly offering us guidance along the way.”

Since the dashboard’s launch in March 2020, Douglas County GIS has enhanced it numerous times, adding a vast array of data and updating the information almost daily. Schonlau said Douglas County’s COVID-19 Dashboard was also the first of its kind in Nebraska.

“We’ve seen well over a million hits on the COVID-19 Dashboard and it continues to be the leading source of COVID-19 infection data for Douglas County,” Schonlau said. “It’s been very rewarding for myself and my staff to be able to utilize our knowledge, our skills and our infrastructure to provide a service that is very important and useful to the public.”

Drive-thru testing was part of the Health Department's early COVID-19 response.

This mass vaccination clinic at Creighton University was one of many clinics organized by the Health Department for Douglas County residents.



Photo credit: Douglas County Health Department

CONSTANT REINVENTION KEY FOR HEALTH DEPARTMENT



Planning for emergencies and disasters is part of the Douglas County Health Department's key mission. But in early 2020, no one realized how massive the challenge ahead would be – battling SARS-CoV-2, more commonly referred to as COVID-19.

"The response to COVID-19 was launched during a period of uncertainty," said Dr. Lindsay Huse, director of the Douglas County Health Department. "Health Department leaders knew about SARS, but the origins of the disease were shrouded in mystery and rumor. As cases began to appear in the United States, County officials knew it was only a matter of time before the first cases were confirmed in Douglas County."

There were so many questions. How transmissible was this new disease? Would it create a life-threatening situation, or would it be mild? How quickly could this virus change?

How does it spread? Would masks help? How close should you be to strangers? Is it wise to gather in public? Will people have to change holiday customs?

Regardless of the unknowns, the Health Department worked swiftly and courageously, often around the clock, to respond to the most severe health crisis in decades.

"Our staff always had to be ready to change what they were doing and take on new tasks," Dr. Huse said. "Innovation and flexibility have been essential to our response over the past two and half years."

Here's a look at some of the Health Department's highlights:

- Masks were mandated and enforced to mitigate the spread while school and work habits moved to at-home and remote options.
- The Epidemiology Section played a major role in the response, working to collect and analyze data and serving as the center for contact tracing and interviews.
- The department hired more than 70 employees to assist with the COVID-19 response.
- The Health Department set up a COVID-19 hotline to answer questions from the public, but also to prevent the spread of misinformation. As of late August 2022, nearly 70,000 phone calls had been received, including almost 2,700 in Spanish.
- Mass vaccination clinics were established in every quadrant of Douglas County to guarantee equity and convenience. To date, more than 380,000 Douglas County residents are fully vaccinated, and more than 1.2 million doses of the vaccines have been given.
- Outreach efforts included hiring community leaders to coordinate education and combat suspicion of the virus. Health Department officials also participated in hundreds of interviews with local, regional, and even national news outlets.
- The department's Health Navigators delivered supplies to residents in isolation and quarantine, eventually offering home testing and home vaccinations.

While the challenge of COVID-19 remains more than two years later, the Health Department is equipped and continues the fight to make Douglas County a healthy, vibrant and resilient community for everyone.



A look at Main Street in Elkhorn.

Photo credit: Brad Williams Photography



Photo credit: Douglas County

Volunteers of Douglas County's Adopt-A-Road program pick up trash and litter along West Dodge Road in Waterloo.

Douglas County **24/7 OPERATIONS**



KATHY ALLEN

**DOUGLAS
COUNTY 911**

Douglas County Emergency Communications, also known as Douglas County 911, is the vital link between the citizens of Douglas County and more than 15 police, fire and EMS agencies, including the Omaha Police Department, the Omaha Fire Department and the Douglas County Sheriff's Office. With a staff of 75 dispatchers and operators, Director Kathy Allen said she's proud of her team's perseverance throughout the pandemic.

- Douglas County 911 implemented a COVID screening process for all 911 callers to ensure first responders were aware of any COVID exposures prior to arriving on scene.
- Even through all of the challenges of the pandemic, Douglas County 911 still found time to give back to the community by hosting several food donation drives to help those in need.
- Douglas County 911 averages more than 800,000 calls a year, and the staff continued to answer more than 90 percent of the incoming 911 calls in less than 10 seconds throughout the pandemic.



ERIN NELSON

**DOUGLAS COUNTY
HEALTH CENTER**

The Douglas County Health Center, which has proudly served older adults for more than 125 years, is the second largest nursing home in Nebraska with 254 long term care beds. Erin Nelson, administrator of the Douglas County Health Center, said the Health Center faced many challenges throughout the pandemic as many rules and regulations were put in place to keep residents safe. Nelson said her team focused on maintaining a healthy and interactive environment for residents.

- Thanks to community donations, the Health Center was able to provide electronic devices for many residents so they could stay connected with their friends and families.
- The Douglas County Health Center implemented facility-wide livestreaming so residents could continue to enjoy activities such as bingo and movies in the comfort of their rooms.
- During the pandemic, the Health Center received funding from the CARES Act and ARPA funding which allowed for major upgrades to the HVAC systems, resident whirlpool areas and the front lobby area.



SHERRY DRIVER

**DOUGLAS COUNTY
COMMUNITY
MENTAL HEALTH
CENTER**

The Douglas County Community Mental Health Center provides quality mental health and substance abuse services in a safe, caring and therapeutic environment.

- During the pandemic, CMHC implemented many changes to its operations to ensure safety and help reduce the spread of COVID-19. Group meeting spaces, activities and meal areas all had to be adjusted. For example, CMHC's Social Detoxification Program, which works with clients withdrawing from alcohol, opiates, cocaine, meth and other illegal substances with 24-hour nursing care, added new tables in common areas to expand social distancing during meal times.
- The Psychiatric Outpatient Clinic developed telehealth services and a walk-up pharmacy window as well as delivered personal care packages to individuals in isolation during the pandemic. The clinic worked diligently to ensure there were no interruptions in services for those seeking behavioral healthcare.
- During the pandemic, CMHC upgraded its air handling units, added secure and safe televisions in each room and created a low exposure room to be used as needed.

Douglas County **24/7 OPERATIONS** *continued*



MIKE MYERS

**DOUGLAS COUNTY
CORRECTIONS**

The Douglas County Department of Corrections, which works to provide a safe environment for more than 1,100 incarcerated individuals, faced many challenges throughout the pandemic. Director Mike Myers called his team innovative for their efforts to reduce the spread of COVID-19 and ensure safety for all.

- Purchased virus killing robots as one of many components to keep everyone as safe as possible during the pandemic.
- Became one of the first jails in the nation to implement body worn cameras throughout the department.
- Implemented virtual court hearings to keep the justice system moving despite pandemic-related challenges.
- Collaborated with many County and community partners to provide incarcerated individuals with opportunities to improve mental health, overcome addiction, achieve educational milestones like GED, and job training and placement opportunities – even throughout the pandemic.



**BRAD
ALEXANDER**

**DOUGLAS COUNTY
YOUTH CENTER**

The Douglas County Youth Center is a short term, secure detention facility for youth who have been detained by the courts, state probation, or a law enforcement agency in Douglas County. While youth remain detained until the courts or probation office requests them to be released, DCYC provides them with opportunities to attend educational, recreational, religious and other types of programming. Here are some of the ways DCYC persevered and pivoted through the pandemic:

- Offered youth unlimited phone calls to family.
- Implemented video visitation for youth and families when in-person visiting wasn't available due to COVID-19.
- Provided court appearances via video conferencing to mitigate health risks.
- Executed a plan to provide education online to ensure students would continue to earn credits while the teachers worked from home. During this challenging time, 19 students completed their academic requirements for graduation and the young people earned a total of 1,074 academic credits.
- A Multi-Disciplinary Treatment team (MDT), which meets weekly to address the needs of youth, continued to meet virtually in order to prioritize mental health needs. Grant funding was also secured during this time to pay salaries for three licensed mental health practitioners in order to better manage the challenges youth were facing during the pandemic.
- DCYC nurses were trained to administer COVID-19 tests and they utilized telehealth communications to maintain behavioral health services for youth.

Douglas County **DEPARTMENTS**



PAUL JOHNSON

**DOUGLAS COUNTY
EMERGENCY
MANAGEMENT
AGENCY**

Douglas County Emergency Management Agency (DCEMA), which stays busy with year-round planning, preparing and responding to community emergencies and natural disasters, oversaw many key projects throughout the pandemic. Here are some of them:

- Orchestrated and coordinated the Unified Command staff for the COVID-19 response. Regular meetings were held each week to review progress and establish objectives for first responders from the different departments and agencies.
- Performed major repairs on storm warning sirens within the County. Once repaired, each siren is tested prior to being put back into service.
- Participated in the planning and full scale Federal Aviation Administration compliant plane crash exercise at Omaha's Eppley Airfield. Patient casualties were simulated by volunteers and objectives related to fire response and hospital admissions were exercised.
- Activated the Emergency Operations Center for the Derecho Windstorm that took place on December 15, 2021. The effects of the windstorm impacted a portion of Douglas County.
- Participated in the planning and implementation of population and fan control tactics for the College World Series. Planning is focused on crowd and traffic control, medical response and severe weather events. DCEMA also provides on-site monitoring during the College World Series in June.



BENSON ELMORE

**DOUGLAS COUNTY
VETERANS
SERVICE OFFICE**

From 2020 to 2022, the Douglas County Veterans Service Office, which provides confidential counseling and assistance to veterans and their families who are applying for veterans programs and benefits, has assisted over 12,000 veterans and members of their families in Douglas County. Here are some other accomplishments of the Veterans Service Office during the pandemic:

- Assisted veterans and their dependents with obtaining more than \$11.7 million in VA benefits and nearly \$280,000 in Nebraska Department of Veterans Affairs Aid from July 2020 to June 2021.
- Helped to establish Douglas County as a Hidden Heroes County, joining the Elizabeth Dole Foundation's network of more than 135 communities nationwide, committed to identifying military caregivers and increasing awareness and support.
- Partnered with Wounded Warriors Family Support, a veteran-founded and veteran-operated charity serving wounded veterans and their families.
- Started community collaborations with New Visions Homeless Services to provide assistance to our homeless veterans.
- Developed a process to assist in identifying incarcerated veterans with the goal of getting them into the Douglas County's Veterans Treatment Court.



Douglas County **DEPARTMENTS** *continued*



KENT HOLM

DOUGLAS COUNTY ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES

Douglas County Environmental Services provides a host of direct and indirect services to the residents of Douglas County, including land-use planning, building permits, landscape maintenance, solid waste disposal, stormwater management and weed control.

- With assistance from ARPA funding, Environmental Services was able to upgrade its building permit software, enabling citizens to apply online for building permits and schedule inspections.
- The remote work dictated by the pandemic emphasized the need for electronic/digital records. Environmental Services began the transition to Laserfiche, a robust document management functionality that improves the ability to file, query, search and retrieve documents and to manage record retention. These functionalities increase efficiencies, reduce document redundancy, and can automate monthly work processes.
- The pandemic provided opportunities for Environmental Services to improve overall customer service delivery, freeing up staff from administrative tasks and allowing for more customer service-centric activity, such as freeing up building inspectors to do more on-site inspections.



**MELISSA
SEWICK**

DOUGLAS COUNTY GENERAL ASSISTANCE

Douglas County General Assistance provides basic human services to the low-income residents of the County who are not eligible for other public assistance and/or do not have sufficient income or resources to meet those basic needs. These services may include financial aid for shelter (e.g. rent, mortgage, and/or utilities), cremation, out-of-county transportation, bus tickets, and/or non-food assistance. Here's how General Assistance persevered through the pandemic:

- Provided more than \$3.9 million in direct financial aid for shelter (e.g. rent, mortgage, and/or utilities), cremation, out-of-county transportation, bus tickets, and/or non-food assistance to over 3,000 Douglas County residents from 2020 to 2022.
- Assisted 210 clients with their applications for federal disability which resulted in the County being reimbursed over \$560,000 for services rendered while the client was pending disability.
- Oversaw the 2020 Douglas County CARES Rental Assistance Program, which provided rental assistance to eligible County residents whose income was negatively impacted by COVID-19. Through this program, Douglas County helped prevent evictions and provide financial support for 4,184 adults and 4,566 children in renter households by dispersing over \$7 million in rental assistance.

Douglas County **DEPARTMENTS** *continued*



MIKE SCHONLAU
DOUGLAS COUNTY
GIS

In addition to the Douglas County COVID-19 Dashboard, which you can read about on page 12 of this report, Douglas County GIS has been busy with several project throughout the pandemic:

- In the summer of 2020, DCGIS launched a new comprehensive drone program to capture aerial photo/video and publish it for use within GIS mapping applications, reports and presentations. Since launch, DCGIS has successfully flown over 160 flights for various County and city departments, including capturing large events like the College World Series, the U.S. Senior Open and documenting storm cleanup (2021 wind storms).
- In late 2021, DCGIS worked with the Douglas County Board of Commissioners and Omaha City Council to redistrict the Commissioner/Council districts using the 2020 Census data and new Nebraska legislative districts. The new district maps sought to better balance population among the various districts. Final redistricting maps were approved by both entities in December of 2021.



SHAWNE
JOHNSON
(COONFARE)
DOUGLAS COUNTY
JUVENILE
ASSESSMENT
CENTER

The Douglas County Juvenile Assessment Center (JAC), which is dedicated to improving the lives of youth and strengthening families in Douglas County, provides screening and assessment for youth who are involved, or at risk of becoming involved, with the juvenile justice system. COVID-19 did not stop the JAC's mission and its service to youth and families:

- When the pandemic closed down in-person operations across the country, the JAC moved all client interactions to services in a virtual capacity. The JAC increased flexibility in ways to complete and manage necessary paperwork and now offers appointments virtually, in-person or a combination of both.
- The JAC has used the challenges and lessons learned during the pandemic as opportunities to grow and work toward implementation of evaluation recommendations, including close examination of our assessment tools and processes, caseloads and case management intensity, and youth and family communication.
- The JAC has implemented a new behavioral health screening instrument, which can be utilized with every type of appointment format.



A display of Fourth of July fireworks in Omaha.

Photo credit: Brad Williams Photography



Photo credit: Brad Williams Photography

A look at Main Street in Valley.

Douglas County **DEPARTMENTS** *continued*



ERIC CARLSON

**DOUGLAS COUNTY
PURCHASING**

Douglas County Purchasing, which supports both Douglas County and the City of Omaha, supplies departments and agencies with all necessary materials, equipment and services in a timely, efficient and cost-effective manner. Here are some of the department's highlight from 2020-2022:

- Moved many of its processes to an electronic workflow in a matter of a few weeks, to allow for a rotating staff in the office as a COVID-19 exposure mitigation strategy. Purchasing was able to accomplish this with minimal impact to service levels.
- Worked closely with Douglas County Administration to facilitate the use of CARES Act funding and ARPA funding in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.
- The Purchasing Director Eric Carlson was selected to participate in the National Association of Counties (NACo) Procurement Advisory Committee, which works to promote government procurement best practices.



JERRY LEAHY

**DOUGLAS COUNTY
PUBLIC
PROPERTIES**

Douglas County Public Properties oversees the leasing and maintenance of county offices and properties, including building updates, renovation and new construction and compliance with codes. Here's how Public Properties utilized its resources to manage the pandemic for Douglas County departments:

- Purchased and managed Personal protective equipment (PPE) funds and focused on purchasing scarce materials at every opportunity.
- Increased sanitary operations stations and cleaning devices.
- Purchased and implemented negative air machines to create negative air spaces in COVID-19 impacted areas.
- Implemented new workplace policies such as rotating schedules to mitigate health risks and increase social distancing in the office.
- Replaced HVAC systems to incorporate pandemic safety guidelines at the Douglas County Health Center and Douglas County Department of Corrections.



KAREN BUCHE

**DOUGLAS COUNTY
HUMAN RESOURCES**

Douglas County Human Resources, which supports more than 2,500 County employees, was instrumental in assisting County departments throughout the pandemic.

- Douglas County was one of the first employers in the state to provide COVID-19 paid leave to employees who became ill or needed to care for ill family members.
- Douglas County HR implemented an online onboarding system for employees during the pandemic.
- Activated an Emergency Donated Leave Policy for employees whose sick leave and COVID-19 leave was depleted, allowing them to access leave donated by other employees.
- Where possible, employees were permitted to work remotely to decrease the likelihood of transmission to staff required to report to work.

Elected Officials DIRECTORY



Diane Battiato
(402) 444-7060

DOUGLAS COUNTY ASSESSOR/ REGISTER OF DEEDS

"Serving the citizens of Douglas County in my elected position as Assessor/Register of Deeds has been my passion for the past 18 years. Even through the tough times of COVID-19, we have persevered!"



Donald W. Kleine
(402) 444-7040

DOUGLAS COUNTY ATTORNEY

"The pandemic presented many issues that were difficult to deal with from so many perspectives. Even with those challenges, the hard working individuals of the Douglas County Attorney's Office persevered in their quest to bring justice to the people of Douglas County and serve the public."



Daniel A. Esch
(402) 444-6767

DOUGLAS COUNTY CLERK/ COMPTROLLER

"The best part about working in the Douglas County Clerk's Office is that we have an opportunity to help people every day. A lot of residents aren't sure where to start when they are seeking services from local government, so they often start with us, and then we get them pointed in the right direction."



John Friend
(402) 444-7018

DOUGLAS COUNTY CLERK OF DISTRICT COURT

"The Clerk of the District Court's office worked extremely hard to make sure all citizens had access to the court system. We are proud we were open to serve our customers every day during the pandemic and never closed the office. We took action to be able to provide the safest environment for our employees, as well as our customers."



Tom Riley
(402) 444-7175

DOUGLAS COUNTY PUBLIC DEFENDER

"The pandemic required some major adjustments in how our office handled our cases. Jail visits with our clients and many court appearances were required to be remote and many trials had to be continued. That said, our attorneys and staff managed to muddle through and protect our clients' interest."



Tom Wheeler
(402) 444-6641

DOUGLAS COUNTY SHERIFF

"Sheriff's deputies answered every call during the height of the pandemic. Our commitment to duty never wavered."



John W. Ewing
(402) 444-7103

DOUGLAS COUNTY TREASURER

"The Douglas County Treasurer's Office worked diligently during the pandemic to ensure we created a contingency plan, allowing us to remain true to our core values and serve our customers. Our staff carries out their duties with the utmost dedication and integrity as we strive to be the standard of excellence."

Please note: The Douglas County Engineer Office is currently vacant.



Meet your **COUNTY ADMINISTRATION STAFF**



Patrick Bloomingdale
*Chief Administrative
Officer*



Diane Carlson
*Deputy County
Administrator*



Kim Hawekotte
*Deputy County Administrator,
Juvenile Services*



Cheri Albin
Accountant



Lisa Andersen
Clerk



Leia Baez
*Communications
Director*



Colby J. Barak
*Administrative
Receptionist*



Sharon Bourke
*Administrative
Assistant*



Abby Carbaugh
*Data
Administrator*



Karen M. Cole
*Office
Manager*



Lisa Daubman
*Grant
Coordinator*



Mike Dwornicki
*Internal Audit
Director*



Debora Faga
*Administrative
Assistant*



Catherine Hall
*Assistant County
Administrator*



Marisa Hattab
*Diversity, Equity, &
Inclusion Officer*



Steve Jackson
*Grant
Specialist*



Jan Johnson
*Employee Benefits/
Worker's Compensation
Coordinator*



Joe Lorenz
*Director of Budget
and Finance*



Matthew Mundt
*Claims & Safety
Coordinator*



Marcos San Martin
*Intergovernmental
and Labor Relations
Specialist*



John Slobotski
Accountant



Dianne Wallace
IT Coordinator

FOLLOW US

ON OUR SOCIAL NETWORKS



@DOUGLASCOUNTYNE

WE ARE HIRING!

SCAN HERE TO JOIN OUR TEAM



The Gene Leahy Mall is an iconic feature in Omaha, Douglas County's largest city.

Photo credit: Brad Williams Photography.



CONTACT US

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